

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PDEV, PGOV, UK (NI)

SUBJECT: SEARCH FOR PEACE INTENSIFIES NI DILEMMA

REF: LONDON 278

1. JANUARY 20 PRESS REPORTS THAT TWO SENIOR NI OFFICE CIVIL SERVANTS MET JANUARY 19 WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF PROVISIONAL IRA (IRAP), AND THAT RESULTS OF MEETING PROVIDE BASIS FOR GROWING BELIEF THAT IRAP CEASE FIRE WILL BE EXTENDED. THIS OPTIMISTIC ASSESSMENT IS BUTTRESSED BY TWO OTHER DEVELOPMENTS: FACT THAT NO SIGNIFICANT ACTS OF IRA-SPONSORED VIOLENCE HAVE OCCURRED SINCE CEASE FIRE LIFTED ON JANUARY 16, AND REPORTS THAT CHURCH MEN WHO EARLIER MET WITH IRAP AT FEAKLE HAVE EXPRESSED VIEW THAT TRUCE CAN BE SALVAGED. THESE DEVELOPMENTS, HOWEVER, MUST BE WEIGHED AGAINST REPORTS OF RISING PROTESTANT CONCERN THAT HMG MAY CEDE TOO MUCH TO IRAP, AGAIN POINTING UP NATURE OF BASIC DILEMMA CONSTRAINING HMG'S EFFORTS TO BRING PEACE TO NI (REFTEL).

2. WHILE NI OFFICE OFFICIALS WERE MEETING WITH PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN, NI PERMANENT UNDERSECRETARY COOPER MET
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WITH MILITANT LOYALISTS WHO VOICED THEIR "DISAPPROVAL"

OF HMG/SINN FEIN MEETING. ULSTER LOYALIST CENTRAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE, WHICH INCLUDES REPRESENTATIVES OF ULSTER WORKERS COUNCIL (UWC) AND SEVERAL PARAMILITARY GROUPS, RELEASED STATEMENT THREATENING TO TAKE "WHATEVER STEPS ARE NECESSARY TO PREVENT SELL-OUT OF THE ULSTER PEOPLE." STATEMENT ALSO STATED THAT LOYALIST PARAMILITARY GROUPS MIGHT RESPOND TO IRAP VIOLENCE BY LIFTING THEIR OWN CEASE FIRE. THESE SENTIMENTS WERE ECHOED IN STATEMENT FROM ULSTER DEFENSE ASSOCIATION (UDA).

3. COMMENT: IN ABSENCE OF RELIABLE INFORMATION REGARDING IRAP ATTITUDES AND OBJECTIVES, IT IS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS LIKELIHOOD THAT LATEST PEACE EFFORTS WILL PAY OFF. CLEARLY, HOWEVER, MOST OBSERVERS ARE CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC, DESPITE EVIDENCE OF GROWING UNEASE AMONG MILITANT PROTESTANTS.

SPIERS

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